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The Mountainy Singer

By Seosamh MacCathmhaoil

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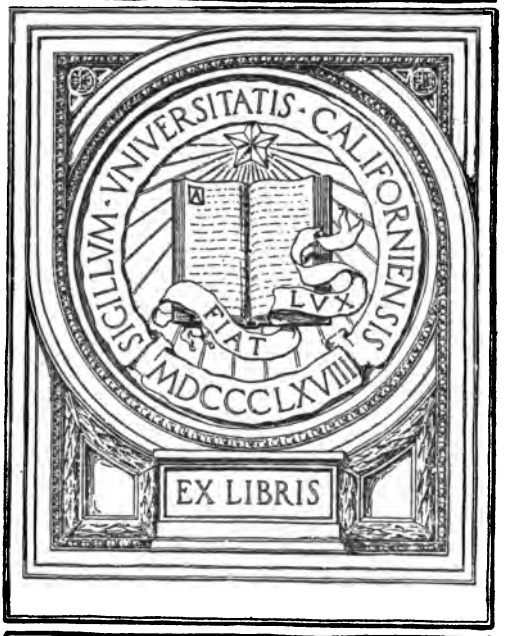

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THE MO[illegible]

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

THE GARDEN OF THE BEES

THE RUSHLIGHT

THE MAN-CHILD

THE GILLY OF CHRIST

THE MOUNTAINY SINGER

BY SEOSAMH MacCATHMHAOIL

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CALIFORNIA

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1909
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Lib. Psalm.

UNIV. OF
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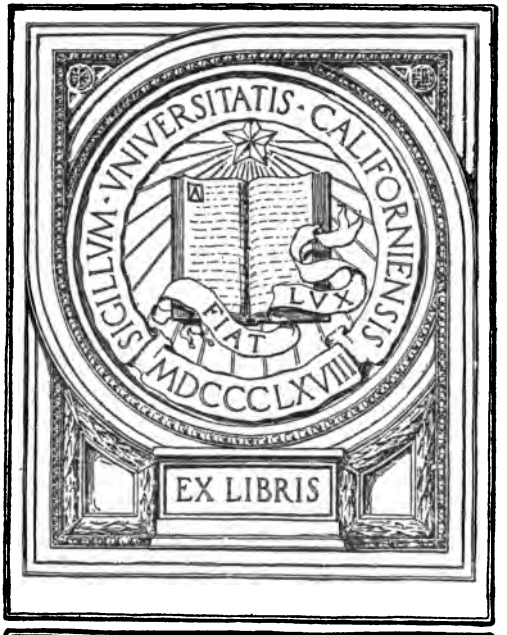
This book is made up of a selection from the Author's early books, with many new poems added.

GIFT OF
Knights of St. Patrick



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THE MOUNTAINY SINGER

MY FIDIL IS SINGING

My fidil is singing
Into the air ;
The wind is stirring,
The moon is fair.

A shadow wanders
Along the road ;
It stops to listen,
And drops its load.

Dreams for a space
Upon the moon,
Then passes, humming
My mountain tune.

THE GOAT-DEALER

Did you see the goat-dealer
All in his jacket green ?
I met him on the rocky road
'Twixt this and Baile-doirin.

A hundred nannies ran before,
And a she-ass behind,
And then the old wanderer himself,
Burnt red with sun and wind.

He gave me the time-a-day
And doitered over the hill,
Walloping his gay ashplant
And shouting his fill.

I think I hear him yet,
Tho' it's a giant's cry
From where I hailed him first,
Standing up to the sky.

Is that Puck Green I see beyond ?
It is, and the stir is there.
By the holy hat, I know then—
He's making for Puck Fair !

WHY CRUSH THE CLARET ROSE

Why crush the claret rose
That blows
So rarely on the tree ?
Wherefore the enmity, dear girl,
Betwixt the rose and thee ?
Art thou not fair enough
With that dark beauty given thee,
That thou must crush the rose
That blows
So rarely on the tree !

LAMENT OF PADRAIC MOR MAC CRUIMIN OVER HIS SONS

I am Padraic Mor mac Cruimin,
Son of Domhnall of the Shroud,
Piper, like my kind before me,
To the household of MacLeod.

Death is in the seed of Cruimin—
All my music is a wail;
Early graves await the poets
And the pipers of the Gael.

Samhain gleans the golden harvests
Duly in their tide and time,
But my body's fruit is blasted
Barely past the Bealtein prime.

Cethlenn claims the fairest fighters
Fitly for her own, her own,
But my seven sons are stricken
Where no battle-pipe is blown.

Flowers of the forest fallen
On the sliding summer stream—
Light and life and love are with me,
Then are vanished into dream.

Berried branches of the rowan
Rifled in the wizard wind—
Clan and generation leave me,
Lonely on the heath behind.

Who will soothe a father's sorrow
When his seven sons are gone ?
Who will watch him in his sleeping ?
Who will wake him at the dawn ?

Seven sons are taken from me
In the compass of a year ;
Every bone is bose within me,
All my blood is white with fear.

Seven youths of brawn and beauty
Moulder in their mountain bed,
Up in storied Inis-Scathach
Where their fathers reaped their bread.

Nevermore upon the mountain,
Nevermore in fair or field,
Shall ye see the seven champions
Of the silver-mantled shield.

I will play the "*Cumhadh na Cloinne*,"
Wildest of the rowth of tunes
Gathered by the love of mortal
From the olden druid runes.

Wail ye! Night is on the water;
Wind and wave are roaring loud—
Caoine for the fallen children
Of the piper of MacLeod.

TO A TOWN GIRL

Violet mystery,
Ringleted gold,
Whiteness of whiteness,
Wherefore so cold?

Silent you sit there—
Spirit and mould—
Darkening the dream
That must never be told!

A MARCH MOON

A March moon
Over the mountain crest,
Ceanabhan blowing:
Her neck and breast.

Arbutus berries
On the tree head:
Her mouth of passion,
Dewy and red.

Cold as cold
And hot as hot,
She loves me . . . .
And she loves me not!

A THOUSAND FEET UP

A thousand feet up : twilight.
Westwards, a clump of firtrees silhouetted against a bank of blue cumulus cloud ;
The June afterglow like a sea behind.
The mountain trail, white and clear where human feet have worn it, zigzagging higher and higher till it loses itself in the southern skyline.
A patch of young corn to my right hand, swaying and swaying continuously, tho' hardly an air stirs.
A falcon wheeling overhead.
The moon rising.
The damp smell of the night in my nostrils.

O hills, O hills,
To you I lift mine eyes !
I kneel down and kiss the grass under my feet.
The sense of the mystery and infinity of things overwhelms me, annihilates me almost.
I kneel down, and silently worship.

THE DARK

This is the dark.
This is the dream that came of the dark.
This is the dreamer who dreamed the dream that came of the dark.
This is the look the dreamer looked who dreamed the dream that came of the dark.

This is the love that followed the look the dreamer looked who dreamed the dream that came of the dark.

This is the breast that fired the love that followed the look the dreamer looked who dreamed the dream that came of the dark.

This is the song was made to the breast that fired the love that followed the look the dreamer looked who dreamed the dream that came of the dark.

This is the sword that tracked the song was made to the breast that fired the love that followed the look the dreamer looked who dreamed the dream that came of the dark.

This is the rope that swung the sword that tracked the song was made to the breast that fired the love that followed the look the dreamer looked who dreamed the dream that came of the dark.

This is the dark that buried the rope that swung the sword that tracked the song was made to the breast that fired the love that followed the look the dreamer looked who dreamed the dream that came of the dark.

This is the dark, indeed!

REYNARDINE

If by chance you look for me
Perhaps you'll not me find,
For I'll be in my castle—
Enquire for Reynardine!

Sun and dark he courted me—
His eyes were red as wine:
He took me for his leman,
Did my sweet Reynardine.

Sun and dark the gay horn blows,
The beagles run like wind:
They know not where he harbours,
The fairy Reynardine.

If by chance you look for me
Perhaps you'll not me find,
For I'll be in my castle—
Enquire for Reynardine!

SNOW

Hills that were dark
At sparing-time last night
Now in the dawn-ring
Glimmer cold and white.

I AM THE GILLY OF CHRIST

I am the gilly of Christ,
The mate of Mary's Son;
I run the roads at seeding time,
And when the harvest's done.

I sleep among the hills,
The heather is my bed;
I dip the termon-well for drink,
And pull the sloe for bread.

No eye has ever seen me,
But shepherds hear me pass,
Singing at fall of even
Along the shadowed grass.

The beetle is my bellman,
The meadow-fire my guide,
The bee and bat my ambling nags
When I have need to ride.

All know me only the Stranger,
Who sits on the Saxon's height;
He burned the bacach's little house
On last Saint Brigid's Night.

He sups off silver dishes,
And drinks in a golden horn,
But he will wake a wiser man
Upon the Judgment Morn!

I am the gilly of Christ,
The mate of Mary's Son;
I run the roads at seeding time,
And when the harvest's done.

The seed I sow is lucky,
The corn I reap is red;
And whoso sings the Gilly's Rann
Will never cry for bread.

GO, PLOUGHMAN, PLOUGH

Go, ploughman, plough
The mearing lands,
The meadow lands,
The mountain lands:
All life is bare
Beneath your share,
All love is in your lusty hands.

Up, horses, now!
And straight and true
Let every broken furrow run:
The strength you sweat
Shall blossom yet
In golden glory to the sun.

GO, REAPER

Go, reaper,
Speed and reap,
Go take the harvest
Of the plough :
The wheat is standing
Broad and deep,
The barley glumes
Are golden now.

Labour is hard,
But it endures
Like love :
The land is yours :
Go reap the life
It gives you now,
O sunbrowned master
Of the plough !

THE GOOD PEOPLE

The millway path looks like a wraith,
The lock is black as ink,
And silently in stream and sky
The stars begin to blink.

I see them pass along the grass
With slow and solemn tread :
Aoibheall, their queen, is in between—
A corpse is at their head!

They wander on with faces wan,
And dirges sad as wind.
I know not, but it may be that
The dead's of human kind.

THE STORM IS STILL, THE RAIN HATH CEASED

The storm is still, the rain hath ceased
To vex the beauty of the east :
A linnet singeth in the wood
His hermit song of gratitude.

So shall I sing when life is done
To greet the glory of the sun ;
And cloud and star and stream and sea
Shall dance for very ecstasy!

SCARE-THE-CROWS

Twopence a day for scaring crows—
Tho' the rain beats and the wind blows!

The scholars think I've little wit,
But, God! I've got my share of it.

Why does the gorbing land-shark
Leave ploughed rigs for the green park?

Where little's to find, and nothing's to eat
But rabbits' droppings and pheasants' meat.

He knows better than come my way
Between the mouth and the tail of day.

For one lick of my hurding wattle
Would lay him out like a showman's bottle!

And the thoughts that rise in my crazed head
When the cloud is low and the wind's dead.

Where you see only clay and stones
I see swords and blanching bones. . . .

But I'll leave you now—it's gone six,
And the smoke is curling over the ricks.

And it's hardly like that the land-shark
Will trouble the furrows after dark.

A CRADLE-SONG

Sleep, white love, sleep,
A cedarn cradle holds thee,
And twilight, like a silver-woven coverlid,
Enfolds thee.
Moon and star keep charmèd watch
Upon thy lying;
Water plovers thro' the dusk
Are tremulously crying.
Sleep, white love mine,
Till day doth shine.

Sleep, white love, sleep,
The daylight wanes, and deeper
Gathers the blue darkness
O'er the cradle of the sleeper.
Cliodhna's curachs, carmine-oared,
On Loch-da-linn are gleaming;
Blind bats flutter thro' the night,
And carrion birds are screaming.
Sleep, white love mine,
Till day doth shine.

Sleep, white love, sleep,
The holy mothers, Anne and Mary,
Sit high in heaven, dreaming
On the seven ends of Eire.
Brigid sits beside them,
Spinning lamb-white wool on whorls,
Singing fragrant songs of love
To little naked boys and girls.
Sleep, white love mine,
Till day doth shine.

TWINE THE MAZES THRO' AND THRO'

Twine the mazes thro' and thro'
Over beach and margent pale;
Not a bawn appears in view,
Not a sail!

Round about!
In and out!
Thro' the stones and sandy bars
To the music of the stars!
The asteroidal fire that dances
Nightly in the northern blue,
The brightest of the boreal lances,
Dances not so light as you,
Cliodhna!
Dances not so light as you.

THE FIGHTING-MAN

A fighting-man he was,
Guts and soul;
His blood as hot and red
As that on Cain's hand-towel.

A copper-skinned six-footer,
Hewn out of the rock.
Who would stand up against
His hammer-knock?

Not a sinner—
No, and not one dared!
Giants showed clean heels
When his arm was bared.

I've seen him swing an anvil
Fifty feet,
Break a bough in two,
And tear a twisted sheet.

And the music of his roar—
Like oaks in thunder cleaving;
Lips foaming red froth,
And flanks heaving.

God! a goodly man,
A Gael, the last
Of those that stood with Dan
On Mullach-Maist!

MY MOTHER HAS A WEE RED SHOE

My mother has a wee red shoe—
She bought it off a bacach-man ;
And all the neighbours say it's true
He stole it off a Leath-brogan.
Bacach-man, bacach-man,
Where did you get it ?
Faith now, says he,
In my leather wallet !

My father has an arrow-head—
He begged it off poor Peig na Blath ;
And Mor, the talking-woman, said
She found it in a fairy rath.
Peig na Blath, Peig na Blath,
Where did you get it ?
Faith now, says she,
In my wincey jacket !

My brother has a copper pot—
He tryst' it wi' a shuiler-man ;
And gossip says it's like as not
He truff'd it from a Clobhair-ceann.
Shuiler-man, shuiler-man,
Where did you get it ?
Faith now, says he,
In my breeches' pocket !

BY A WONDROUS MYSTERY

By a wondrous mystery
Christ of Mary's fair body
Upon a middle winter's morn,
Between the tides of night and day,
In Ara's holy isle was born.
Mary went upon her knee
Travailing in ecstasy,
And Brigid, mistress of the birth,
Full reverently and tenderly
Laid the child upon the earth.
Then the dark-eyed rose did blow,
And rivers leaped from out the snow.
Earth grew lyrical : the grass,
As the light winds chanced to pass—
Than magian music more profound—
Murmured in a maze of sound.
White incense rose upon the hills
As from a thousand thuribles,
And in the east a seven-rayed star
Proclaimed the news to near and far.
The shepherd danced, the gilly ran,
The boatman left his curachan ;
The king came riding on the wind
To offer gifts of coin and kind ;
The druid dropped his ogham wand,
And said, " Another day's at hand,
A newer dawn is in the sky :
I put my withered sapling by.
The druid Christ has taken breath
To sing the runes of life and death."

I GATHER THREE EARS OF CORN

I gather three ears of corn,
And the Black Earl from over the sea
Sails across in his silver ships,
And takes two out of the three.

I might build a house on the hill
And a barn of the speckly stone,
And tell my little stocking of gold,
If the Earl would let me alone.

But he has no thought for me—
Only the thought of his share,
And the softness of the linsey shifts
His lazy daughters wear.

There is a God in heaven,
And angels, score on score,
Who will not see my hearthstone cold
Because I'm crazed and poor.

My childer have my blood,
And when they get their beards
They will not be content to run
As gillies to their herds!

The day will come, maybe,
When we can have our own,
And the Black Earl will come to us
Begging the bacach's bone!

THE TINKERS

" One *ciarog* knows another *ciarog*,
And why shouldn't I know you, you rogue?"
" They say a stroller will never pair
Except with one of his kind and care . . ."
So talked two tinkers prone in the shough—
And then, as the fun got a trifle rough,
They flitted: he with his corn-straw bass,
She with her load of tin and brass:
As mad a match as you would see
In a twelvemonth's ride thro' Christendie.
He roared—they both were drunk as hell:
She danced, and danced it mighty well!
I could have eyed them longer, but
They staggered for the Quarry Cut:
That half-perch seemed to trouble them more
Than all the leagues they'd tramped before.
Some'll drink at the fair the morrow,
And some'll sup with the spoon of sorrow;
But whether *they*'ll get as far as Droichid
The night—well, who knows that but God?

AS I CAME OVER THE GREY, GREY HILLS

As I came over the grey, grey hills
And over the grey, grey water,
I saw the gilly leading on,
And the white Christ following after.

Where and where does the gilly lead ?
And where is the white Christ faring ?
They've travelled the four grey sounds of Orc,
And the four grey seas of Eirinn.

The moon it set and the wind's away,
And the song in the grass is dying,
And a silver cloud on the silent sea
Like a shrouding sheet is lying.

But Christ and the gilly will follow on
Till the ring in the east is showing,
And the awny corn is red on the hills,
And the golden light is glowing !

A NORTHERN LOVE-SONG

Brigidin Ban of the lint-white locks,
What was it gave you that flaxen hair,
Long as the summer heath in the rocks ?
What was it gave you those eyes of fire,
Lip so waxen and cheek so wan ?

Tell me, tell me, Brigidin Ban,
Little white bride of my heart's desire.

Was it the Good People stole you away,
Little white changeling, Brigidin Ban ?
Carried you off in the ring of the dawn,
Laid like a queen on her purple car,
Carried you back 'twixt the night and the day ;
Gave you that fortune of flaxen hair,
Gave you those eyes of wandering fire,
Lit at the wheel of the southern star ;
Gave you that look so far away,
Lip so waxen and cheek so wan ?
Tell me, tell me, Brigidin Ban,
Little white bride of my heart's desire.

TO THE GOLDEN EAGLE

Wanderer of the mountain,
Winger of the blue,
From this stormy rock
I send my love to you.

Take me for your lover,
Dark and fierce and true—
Wanderer of the mountain,
Winger of the blue !

A PROPHECY

" The loins of the Galldacht
Shall wither like grass "—
Strange words I heard said
At the Fair of Dun-eas.

" A bard shall be born
Of the seed of the folk,
To break with his singing
The bond and the yoke.

" A sword, white as ashes,
Shall fall from the sky,
To rise, red as blood,
On the charge and the cry.

" Stark pipers shall blow,
Stout drummers shall beat,
And the shout of the north
Shall be heard in the street.

" The strong shall go down,
And the weak shall prevail,
And a glory shall sit
On the sign of the Gaodhal.

" Then Emer shall come
In good time by her own,
And a man of the people
Shall speak from the throne."

Strange words I heard said
At the Fair of Dun-eas—
" The Gaodhaldacht shall live,
The Galldacht shall pass ! "

I MET A WALKING-MAN

I met a walking-man ;
His head was old and grey.
I gave him what I had
To crutch him on his way.
The man was Mary's Son, I'll swear ;
A glory trembled in his hair !

And since that blessed day
I've never known the pinch :
I plough a broad townland,
And dig a river-inch ;
And on my hearth the fire is bright
For all that walk by day or night.

THE NINEPENNY FIDIL

My father and mother were Irish,
And I am Irish, too;
I bought a wee fidil for ninepence,
And it is Irish, too.
I'm up in the morning early
To meet the dawn of day,
And to the lintwhite's piping
The many's the tune I play.

One pleasant eve in June time
I met a lochrie-man:
His face and hands were weazen,
His height was not a span.
He boor'd me for my fidil—
"You know," says he, "like you,
My father and mother were Irish,
And I am Irish, too!"

He took my wee red fidil,
And such a tune he turned—
The Glaise in it whispered,
The Lionan in it m'urned.
Says he, "My lad, you're lucky—
I wish t' I was like you:
You're lucky in your birth-star,
And in your fidil, too!"

He gave me back my fidil,
My fidil-stick, also,
And stepping like a mayboy,
He jumped the Leargaidh Knowe.
I never saw him after,
Nor met his gentle kind;
But, whiles, I think I hear him
A-wheening in the wind!

My father and mother were Irish,
And I am Irish, too;
I bought a wee fidil for ninepence,
And it is Irish, too.
I'm up in the morning early
To meet the dawn of day,
And to the lintwhite's piping
The many's the tune I play.

GRASSLANDS ARE FAIR

Grasslands are fair,
Ploughlands are rare.
Grasslands are lonely,
Ploughlands are comely.
Grasslands breed cattle,
Ploughlands feed people.
Grasslands are not wrought,
Ploughlands swell with thought.

WINTER SONG

'Twould skin a fairy
It is so airy,
And the snow it nips so cold:
Shepherd and squire
Sit by the fire,
The sheep are in the fold.

You have your wish—
A reeking dish,
And rubble walls about;
So pity the poor
That have no door
To keep the winter out!

I FOLLOW A STAR

I follow a star
Burning deep in the blue,
A sign on the hills
Lit for me and for you!

Moon-red is the star,
Halo-ringed like a rood,
Christ's heart in its heart set,
Streaming with blood.

Follow the gilly
Beyond to the west :
He leads where the Christ lies
On Mary's white breast.

King, priest and prophet—
A child, and no more—
Adonai the Maker !
Come, let us adore.

THE SILENCE OF UNLABOURED FIELDS

The silence of unlaboured fields
Lies like a judgment on the air :
A human voice is never heard :
The sighing grass is everywhere—
The sighing grass, the shadowed sky,
The cattle crying wearily !

Where are the lowland people gone ?
Where are the sun-dark faces now ?
The love that kept the quiet hearth,
The strength that held the speeding plough ?
Grasslands and lowing herds are good,
But better human flesh and blood !

THE BEGGAR'S WAKE

I watched at a beggar's wake
In the hills of Bearna-barr,
And the old men were telling stories
Of Troy and the Trojan war.

And a flickering fire of bog-deal
Burned on the open hearth,
And the night-wind roared in the chimney,
And darkness was over the earth.

And Tearlach Ban MacGiolla,
The piper of Gort, was there,
And he sat and he dreamed apart
In the arms of a sugan chair.

And sudden he woke from his dream
Like a dream-frightened child,
And his lips were pale and trembling,
And his eyes were wild.

And he stood straight up, and he cried,
With a wave of his withered hand,
" The days of the grasping stranger
Shall be few in the land !

" The scrip of his doom is written,
The thread of his shroud is spun ;
The net of his strength is broken,
The tide of his life is run. . . ."

Then he sank to his seat like a stone,
And the watchers stared aghast,
And they crossed themselves for fear
As the coffin cart went past.

. . . . . .

" At the battle of Gleann-muic-duibh
The fate the poets foretold
Shall fall on the neck of the stranger,
And redden the plashy mould.

" The bagmen carry the story
The circuit of Ireland round,
And they sing it at fair and hurling
From Edair to Acaill Sound.

" And the folk repeat it over
About the winter fires,
Till the heart of each one listening
Is burning with fierce desires.

" In the Glen of the Bristleless Boar
They say the battle shall be,
Where Breiffne's iron mountains
Look on the Western sea.

" In the Glen of the Pig of Diarmad,
On Gulban's hither side,
The battle shall be broken
About the Samhain tide.

" Forth from the ancient hills,
With war-cries strident and loud,
The people shall march at daybreak,
Massed in a clamorous crowd.

" War-pipes shall scream and cry,
And battle-banners shall wave,
And every stone on Gulban
Shall mark a hero's grave.

" The horses shall wade to their houghs
In rivers of smoking blood,
Charging thro' heaps of corpses
Scattered in whinny and wood.

" The girths shall rot from their bellies
After the battle is done,
For lack of a hand to undo them
And hide them out of the sun.

" It shall not be the battle
Between the folk and the Sidhe
At the rape of a bride from her bed
Or a babe from its mother's knee.

" It shall not be the battle
Between the white hosts flying
And the shrieking devils of hell
For a priest at the point of dying.

" It shall not be the battle
Between the sun and the leaves,
Between the winter and summer,
Between the storm and the sheaves.

" But a battle to doom and death
Between the Gael and the Gall,
Between the sword of light
And the shield of darkness and thrall.

" And the Gael shall have the mastery
After a month of days,
And the lakes of the west shall cry,
And the hills of the north shall blaze.

" And the neck of the fair-haired Gall
Shall be as a stool for the feet
Of Ciaran, chief of the Gael,
Sitting in Emer's seat ! "—

. . . . . .

At this MacGiolla fainted,
Tearing his yellow hair,
And the young men cursed the stranger,
And the old men mouthed a prayer.

For they knew the day would come,
As sure as the piper said,
When many loves would be parted,
And many graves would be red.

And the wake broke up in tumult,
And the women were left alone,
Keening over the beggar
That died at Gobnat's Stone.

THE BESOM-MAN

Did you see Paidin,
Paidin, the besom-man,
Last night as you came by
Over the mountain ?

A barth of new heather
He bore on his shoulder,
And a bundle of whitlow-grass
Under his oxter.

I spied him as he passed
Beyond the carn head,
But no eye saw him
At the hill foot after.

What has come over him ?
The women are saying.
What can have crossed
Paidin, the besom-man ?

The bogholes he knew
As the curlews know them,
And the rabbits' pads,
And the derelict quarries.

He was humming a tune—
The " Enchanted Valley "—
As he passed me westward
Beyond the carn.

I stood and I listened,
For his singing was strange :
It rang in my ears
The long night after.

What has come over
Paidin, the besom-man ?
What can have crossed him ?
The women keep saying.

They talk of the fairies—
And, God forgive me,
Paidin knew *them*
Like his prayers!

Will you fetch word
Up to the cross-roads
If you see track of him,
Living or dead?

The boys are loafing
Without game or caper;
And the dark piper
Is gone home with the birds.

EVERY SHUILER IS CHRIST

Every shuiler is Christ,
Then be not hard or cold:
The bit that goes for Christ
Will come a hundred-fold.

The ear upon your corn
Will burst before its time;
Your roots will yield a crop
Without manure or lime.

And every sup you give
To crutch him on his way
Will fill your churn with milk,
And choke your barn with hay.

Then when the shuiler begs,
Be neither hard nor cold;
The share that goes for Christ
Will come a hundred-fold.

I WISH AND I WISH

I wish and I wish
And I wish I were
A golden bee
In the blue of the air,
Winging my way
At the mouth of day
To the honey marges
Of Loch-ciuin-ban;
Or a little green drake,
Or a silver swan,
Floating upon
The stream of Aili,
And I to be swimming
Gaily, gaily!

I AM THE MAN-CHILD

I am the man-child. From a virgin womb,
Begot among the hills of virgin loins,
The generation of a hundred kings,
I come. I am the man-child glorious,
The love-son of the second birth foretold
By western bards, the fruit of form and strength
By nature's prophylactic forethought joined
In marriage with their kind, the crown, the peak,
The summit of the scheme of things, the pride
And glory of the hand of God.

Behold!
Where in the spaces of the morning world
The sunrise shines my harbinger, the hills
Leap up, the young winds sing, the rivers dance,
The leaving forests laugh, the eagles scream;
For I am one with them, a mate, a brother,
Bound by nature to the human soul
That thro' the accidents of nature runs.
And wherefore do they leap and laugh and sing,
And dance like vestals on a holyday?
Because their hearts are glad, and mænad-like,
They fain would share the frenzied cup they drink
With me, the man-child glorious.

I am he,
Even he, the master-mould, the paragon!
Behold me in my nonage, child and man:

The ripest grape on beauty's procreant vine,
The reddest apple of ingathering :
Perfect in form, of peerless strength, and free
As Caoilte when he roamed the primal hills
(Those " wildernesses rich with liberty "),
A hero that the shocks of chance might strike,
But never tame, a giant druid-ringed,
A god-like savage of the golden days
Ere service shackled action : free itself
As Oisin when he strayed in Doire-cairn,
His hand upon the mountain top, his feet
Fixt in the flowing sea, his holy head
Crowned by a flight of birds, acclaiming him
The singer of the dawn.

FRAGMENT

I stand upon the summit now :
The falcon, flying from the heath,
Trails darkly o'er the mountain brow
And drops into the gloom beneath.
Night falls, and with it comes the wind
That blew on Fionn time out of mind,
When weary of love-feasts and wars
He left his comrades all behind
To dream upon the quiet stars.
Here on the lonely mountain height
Is ecstasy and living light—

The living inner light that burns
With magic caught from those white urns
That wander thro' the trackless blue
Forever, touching those they know
With beauty, and the things that come
Of beauty. Earth lies at my feet,
A dumb, vast shadow, vast as dumb.

AT THE WHITENING OF THE DAWN

At the whitening of the dawn,
As I came o'er the windy water,
I saw the salmon-fisher's daughter,
Nuala ni Cholumain.
Nuala ni Cholumain,
Nuala ni Cholumain,
Palest lily of the dawn
Is Nuala ni Cholumain.

In the dark of evendown
I went o'er the quiet water,
Dreaming of the fisher's daughter
And her bothy in the town.
And I made this simple rann
Ere the whitening of the dawn,
Singing to the beauty wan
Of Nuala ni Cholumain.

WHO ARE MY FRIENDS

Who are my friends,
Faithful and true ?
Who but the stars
That burn in the blue.

Who but the sun
That sinketh so red,
Who but the clay
That giveth me bread.

Who but the hills,
Who but the sea,
Who but the flowers
That fold on the tree.

Who but the moths
That flutter and pass,
Who but the lambs
That cry in the grass.

Who but the darkness,
Who but the rain,
Who but the grave, the grave—
All else are vain!
All else are vain!

O GLORIOUS CHILDBEARER

O glorious childbearer,
O secret womb,
O gilded bridechamber, from which hath come the sightly Bridegroom forth,
O amber veil,
Thou sittest in heaven, the white love of the Gael.
Thy head is crowned with stars, thy radiant hair
Shines like a river thro' the twilight air;
Thou walkest by trodden ways and trackless seas,
Immaculate of man's infirmities.

CORONACH

Come, pipes, sound
A crooning coronach round,
Till hill and hollow glen and shadowed lake o'erflow
With welling music of our woe.
Beat, beat, ye muffled drums, ye drones and chanters wail,
With heartbreak of the baffled, battle-broken Gael.
The clay is deep on Ireland's breast:
Her proud and bleeding heart is laid at last to rest . .
To rest . . to rest!

TWILIGHT FALLEN

Twilight fallen white and cold,
Child in cradle, lamb in fold;
Glimmering thro' the ghostly trees,
Gemini and Pleiades.
Wounds of Eloim,
Weep on me!

Black-winged vampires flitting by,
Curlews crying in the sky;
Grey mists wreathing from the ground,
Wrapping rath and burial mound.
Wounds of Eloim,
Weep on me!

Heard, like some sad Gaelic strain,
Ocean's ancient voice in pain;
Darkness folding hill and wood,
Sorrow drinking at my blood.
Wounds of Eloim,
Weep on me!

THE DAWN WHITENESS

The dawn whiteness.
A bank of slate-grey cloud lying heavily over it.
The moon, like a hunted thing, dropping into the cloud.

THE DWARF

Look at him now, the son,
And the churchyard twist in his foot,
Standing there by his mother's door,
As if he had taken root!

She crossed a grave, they say,
On a black day in spring,
And bore him in the seventh month—
A poor, misshapen thing.

Kneeling down in the dark
She travailed without a cry,
And gave him the mothering kiss
Between the earth and the sky.

He licks cuckoo-spittle, they say,
And eats the dung of the roads,
Mocking the journeymen
As they pass by with their loads.

Look at his little face—
As grey as wool is grey—
And the cast in his green eye,
So wild and far away.

Does he see Magh-meala ?
Is his breath human breath ?
Are his thoughts of the hidden things
Untouched by time and death ?

Hanging there by the half-door,
Dangling his devil's foot,
Stock-still on the threshold,
As if he had taken root!

I SEE ALL LOVE IN LOWLY THINGS

I see all love in lowly things,
No less than in the lusts of kings :
All beauty, shape and comeliness,
All valour, strength and gentleness,
All genius, wit and holiness.

Out of corruption comes the flower,
The corn is kindred with the clay ;
The plough-hand is a hand of power,
Nobler than gold; brighter than day.

Then let the leper lift his head,
The cripple dance, the captive sing,
The beggar reap and eat his bread—
He is no baser than a king!

'TIS PRETTY TAE BE IN BAILE-LIOSAN

'Tis pretty tae be in Baile-liosan,
'Tis pretty tae be in green Magh-luan;
'Tis prettier tae be in Newtownbreda,
Beeking under the eaves in June.
The cummers are out wi' their knitting and spinning,
The thrush sings frae his crib on the wa',
And o'er the white road the clachan caddies
Play at their marlies and goaling-ba'.

O, fair are the fields o' Baile-liosan,
And fair are the faes o' green Magh-luan;
But fairer the flowers o' Newtownbreda,
Wet wi' dew in the eves o' June.
'Tis pleasant tae saunter the clachan thoro'
When day sinks mellow o'er Dubhais hill,
And feel their fragrance sae softly breathing
Frae croft and causey and window-sill.

O, brave are the haughs o' Baile-liosan,
And brave are the halds o' green Magh-luan;
But braver the hames o' Newtownbreda,
Twined about wi' the pinks o' June.
And just as the face is sae kindly withouten,
The heart within is as guid as gold—
Wi' new fair ballants and merry music,
And cracks cam' down frae the days of old.

'Tis pretty tae be in Baile-liosan,
'Tis pretty tae be in green Magh-luan ;
'Tis prettier tae be in Newtownbreda,
Beeking under the eaves in June.
The cummers are out wi' their knitting and spinning,
The thrush sings frae his crib on the wa',
And o'er the white road the clachan caddies
Play at their marlies and goaling-ba'.

CIARAN, THE MASTER OF HORSES AND LANDS

Ciaran, the master of horses and lands,
Once had no more than the horn on his hands.

But Ciaran is rich now, and Ciaran is great,
And rides with the air of a squire of estate.

O Christ ! and to see the man up on the back
Of a thoroughbred stallion, a bay or a black !

There's not a horsebreeder from Banna to Laoi
Can handle the snaffle so pretty as he !

And Ciaran, for all, has the wit of a child,
A heart just as soft, and an eye just as mild.

No maker of ballads puts curse at his door :
He handsels the singer, and harbours the poor.

For Ciaran, the master of horses and lands,
Once had no more than the horn on his hands.

DEEP WAYS AND DRIPPING BOUGHS

Deep ways and dripping boughs,
The fog falling drearily;
Cowherds calling on their cows,
And I crying wearily,
Wearily, wearily, out-a-door,
Houseless, hearthless, coatless, kindless,
Poorest of the wandering poor.

I am the beggar Christ—
Christ that calmed the castling flood!
Cross and thorn have not sufficed
To punish me as you would;
But out-a-door in wind and rain,
Houseless, hearthless, coatless, kindless,
You keep me wandering in pain.

NIGHT, AND I TRAVELLING

Night, and I travelling.
An open door by the wayside,
Throwing out a shaft of warm yellow light.
A whiff of peat-smoke;
A gleam of delf on the dresser within;
A woman's voice crooning, as if to a child.
I pass on into the darkness.

NIGHT-PIECE

Fill me, O stars,
As with an olden tune.
Look thro' your cloudy bars,
O summer moon;
Look thro', and drench in silver light
My soul this night.

O brief, enchanted dream
Of sea and sky,
Of ploughland, meadow, stream,
And twilight loth to die,
Of fire and dew—
My soul is one with you!

AT MORNING TIDE

At morning tide,
Upon the hill of Sliabh-na-mBan,
I saw the dead Christ glorified!
His body, like the risen sun,
Was all too bright to look upon:
The blue air burned
About him: in his side
And hands and feet there shone
(Thro' stabs and gashes gaping wide)
The golden glory of his blood:

The gilly stood
Upon his right hand: at his feet
The fishers, Peter, James and John,
Knelt worshipping
With outstretched arms, and eyes
To heaven turned:
And Maria, his mother sweet,
(The partner of his mysteries),
And Magdalen and Salome
Came thro' the doorway of the day
Behind him, weeping.
. . . . Then a cloud came o'er
My senses, and I saw and heard no more!

THE MAY-FIRE

Come away, O Maire Ban,
Come away, come away
Where the heads of *ceanabhan*
Tremble in the twilight air,
And the rushes nod and sway,
And no other sound is heard
But the swaying of the rushes,
And the shouts from Croc-an-air,
And the singing of the fidils,
And the laughing of the dancers
Round about the yellow fire,
And the scream of the water-bird.

Come away, O life of me,
O bone of me, O blood of me—
Feilim has a tale to tell:
He would own his love for thee,
Smitten first at Mura's well,
Bitten at the Lammas pattern,
By the blessed Mura's well.
He would tell thee, Maire Ban,
How his pulses leap and thrill
Quicker than the old men's fidils,
Singing out from yonder hill.

Come away, O heart's desire,
From the ruddy-featured circle,
From the story-telling circle,
By the wreathing Bealtein fire.
Come away, come away,
Come away, O Maire Ban,
Where the heads of *ceanabhan*
Tremble in the twilight air,
And the voice of love is heard
Whispering o'er the bending rushes
Like a hidden, holy bird.
Come away, O Maire Ban—
Feilim's face is fairy-wan,
Feilim's heart is sick and pale,
Languishing for love of thee.

I LOVE THE DIN OF BEATING DRUMS

I love the din of beating drums,
The bellowing pipe, the shrieking fife :
The discord and the dissonance is my blood, my breath, my life !
The discord and the dissonance is my life !

Away with flutes and dancing lutes—
Such music likes but lovers' ears :
Give me the beating battledrum,
The gunpeal and the cheers !
The bellowing pipe and battledrum,
The gunpeal and the cheers !

THREE COLTS EXERCISING IN A SIX-ACRE

Three colts exercising in a six-acre,
A hilly sweep of unfenced grass over the road.

What a picture they make against the skyline !
Necks stretched, hocks moving royally, tails flying ;
Farm-lads up, and they crouching low on their withers.

I have a journey to go—
A lawyer to see, and a paper to sign in the Tontine—
But I slacken my pace to watch them.

THE NATURAL

"Lend us the loan of a halfpenny, sir!"—
And he passed with his splendid nose in the air.

A gaunt, grey carcase of skin and bones,
As cold as the river, as hard as the stones.

To him the highway was table and bed,
Shift for the newborn and sheet for the dead.

The wind that blew from Beola crest
Seemed fire to fetter his wild unrest.

The rain that beat on his neck and face,
A goad to quicken him in his pace.

But sorrow a step he changed, and his prayer
Was still—"Lend us the loan of a halfpenny, sir!"

ON THE TOP-STONE

On the top-stone.
A nipping wind blowing.
Winter dusk closing in from the south Ards.
The moon rising, white and fantastic, over the loch and the town below.
I take off my hat, salute her, and descend into the darkness.

THE WOMEN AT THEIR DOORS

The babes were asleep in their cradles,
And the day's drudge was done,
And the women brought their suppers out
To eat them in the sun.

"To-night I will set my needles, Aine,
And Eoghan will have stockings to wear:
I spun the wool of the horny ewe
He bought at the hiring fair. . . .

"But what is that sound I hear, Nabla?—
It is like the cheering of men.
God keep our kind from the devil's snare!"
And the women answered, "Amen!"

Then the moon rose over the valley,
And the cheering died away,
And the women went within their doors
At the mouth of the summer day.

And no men came in at midnight,
And no men came in at the dawn,
And the women keened by their ashy fires
Till their faces were haggard and wan.

For they knew they had gone to the trysting
With pike and musketoon,
To fight for their hearths and altars
At the rising of the moon!

MY LITTLE DARK LOVE

My little dark love is a wineberry,
As swarth and as sweet, I hold;
But as the dew on the wineberry
Her heart is a-cold.

I would her love were as warm as the light
That lives in her eye of grey,
And then my heart would know the peace
It dreams in the hills away.

I would her love were as red as the rose
That blows on her cheek of brown,
And then my sunless soul would laugh
At the woe that weighs it down.

She dwells in the valley, my little dark love,
Where the river sings to the sea,
And an ogham-stone sits by her door,
And nigh to it hazels three.

And oft when the purple twilight comes,
And the blind bats flit in the air,
I wander down from the quiet hills
To seek my sweetheart there.

But she comes never—she loves not me,
Nor ever will love, I hold;
For tho' my heart is a peat of fire,
Her heart is a-cold!

I HEARD A PIPER PIPING

I heard a piper piping
The blue hills among—
And never did I hear
So plaintive a song.

It seemed but a part
Of the hills' melancholy:
No piper living there
Could ever be jolly!

And still the piper piped
The blue hills among,
And all the birds were quiet
To listen to his song.

THE CLOUDS GO BY AND BY

The clouds go by and by,
The heron sings in the blue—
And I lie dreaming, dreaming
Ever of you.

The stag on the hill is free,
And the wind is blowing sweet—
But I lie bound a prisoner
At your feet.

DAVY DAW

Woa! are you there my bonny mare?
Your whinny seems to say—
"By Bealach forge and Creagach fair
We'll gallop hard to-day!"
You champ your snaffle all to foam,
And fleck your counter bright;
But now we bid adieu to home
Until the fall of night.
    Davy Daw, Davy Daw, with his early horn,
    His hunting-crop and bag of corn—
    His heart's as merry as a mottle-thrush
    That sings all day in the hawthorn bush.

Come hither, Bran of ancient seed,
And lick your master's hand;
I swear no dog of purer breed
Is found in all the land.
Brave scion of Cuchullain's branch,
Well do you, hound, uphold
The prowess and the courage staunch
That marked your line of old.
    Davy Daw, Davy Daw, my merry man,
    I love toast crab in a pewter can.
    Our tastes are like as like can be—
    But a measure of ale in the can for me!

The wind is low and scent is good,
And Mada's on the green :
He hid his head in Cratla Wood
Since early yestere'en.
You beat the bush from peep of light,
And set the whins afire ;
And now the tory is in sight,
You've got your heart's desire.
    Davy Daw, Davy Daw, for a crab well-browned
    In the smiling flood of a cruiscin drowned.
    Give me, sirree, my crab and ale,
    And bog or batter, my heart won't fail !

The sun is out, and Davy's up,
And hounds are on the run :
It's hard he'll earn his stirrup-cup
Before the day is done !
A jolly life we hunters lead
Upon the saddle high :
We see no devil in the bead,
And drain our noggins dry.
    Davy Daw, Davy Daw is a huntsman bold ;
    He's more to me than a kingdom's gold.
    A hind for dinner and a hare to sup—
    O that's what I get when Davy's up !

The fox is fast upon the hill,
He's wary in the dale;
But I will ride to Penny Mill
Before I lose his tail.
That brush was born to make a cap
For gallant Eoin Og;
And I will have it, hang-or-hap,
As sure as I'm a rogue.
    Davy Daw, Davy Daw, for a morning chase,
    With an Irish blood to make the pace:
    He's last to check and first to view,
    And hard to the death he leads his queue.

Day in we hunt the spinney fox,
Day out the rapparee;
His cave is in the broken rocks
Above the Correi-buidhe.
A shameful thing, the ladies say,
To hunt your fellow-man;
But follow him till hard at bay
It's just the ladies can!
    Davy Daw, Davy Daw, the brush is won!
    A good job, sir, our work is done.
    Whitefoot went lame this side o' the mill,
    And I'm as dry as an old lime-kiln.

Red rogue, he'll kill his goose no more:
Close work it was, for the light is o'er.
Just *close* work, sir, but the Dub's *close to*,
With a can for me and a crab for you!

BLACK SILE OF THE SILVER EYE

As I rode down to Gartan fair
I met a girl upon the way :
The winter night was on her hair,
The summer dawn was in her eye.

And O, she stepped with such a gait,
And bore her round black head so high,
And tossed it so, I knew her straight
For Sile of the Silver Eye.

" God save you, Sile, love," says I :
" God save you kindly," murmured she—
And love was welling in her eye
As she dropped me the courtesy.

The mountain boys upon the road
Were at themselves for jealousy
When they saw Seamus win the nod
From Sile of the Silver Eye.

We rode together to the fair,
We danced together on the green ;
And, faith, they say a suppler pair
Was ne'er before a piper seen.

Black Sile of the Silver Eye
Has been my wife for twenty year,
And still her sloe-black head is high,
And still her eye is silver clear.

And, God be praised, we have a girl,
As like her as like well can be—
The round black head, the roguish curl,
The soft tongue and the silver eye.

God bless the old, God bless the new,
And send them stout posterity—
Old Sile and young Sile, too—
Both "Sile of the Silver Eye!"

A SHEEPDOG BARKS ON THE MOUNTAIN

A sheepdog barks on the mountain,
The night is fallen cold;
The shepherd blinks at his fire,
The sheep are in the fold.

The moon comes white and quiet
Into the winter sky;
And nothing walks the valley
To-night but you and I.

DEAD OAKLEAVES EVERYWHERE

Dead oakleaves everywhere
Under my feet,
Filling the forest air
With odours sweet.

Acorns, three, four and five,
Falling apace.
Thank God I am alive
This day of grace!

A NIGHT PRAYER

Pray for me, Seachnal,
Pray for me, Mel:
Save me from sin
And the cold stone of hell!

Brigid and Ita
And Eithne the Red,
Spread out your mantles
And cover my bed!

For rann and gospel
Have gone from my mind,
And devils are walking
Abroad in the wind!

I AM THE MOUNTAINY SINGER

I am the mountainy singer,
And I would sing of the Christ
Who followed the paths thro' the mountains
To eat at the people's tryst.

He loved the sun-dark people
As the young man loves his bride,
And he moved among their thatches,
And for them he was crucified.

And the people loved him, also,
More than their houses or lands,
For they had known his pity
And felt the touch of his hands.

And they dreamed with him in the mountains,
And they walked with him on the sea,
And they prayed with him in the garden,
And bled with him on the tree.

Not ever by longing and dreaming
May they come to him now,
But by the thorns of sorrow
That bruised his kingly brow.

THE RAINBOW SPANNING A PLANET SHOWER

The rainbow spanning a planet shower,
The sloe in berry, the flax in flower.

The scholar's satchel, the beggar's staff,
The ploughman's whistle, the tinker's laugh.

The stranded hooker, the breaking wave,
The sunrise gilding the carn of Medb.

The strength of mountains, the swiftness of wind
Blowing over the leagues behind.

The hot lips sealing the spoken word,
The song in gentle places heard.

The wildgoose trumpeting in the blue,
The postcar stuck in a drift of snow.

The bogslide moving, the seaward leap,
The cry, the townland whelmed in sleep.

The sock on the anvil, the thread in the loom,
The Host on the altar, the child in the womb.

The wayside murder, the whispered name,
The hanging body, the hidden shame.

And more—if you but listen and look—
In this, my elemental book!

I WILL GO WITH MY FATHER A-PLOUGHING

I will go with my father a-ploughing
To the green field by the sea,
And the rooks and the crows and the seagulls
Will come flocking after me.
I will sing to the patient horses
With the lark in the white of the air,
And my father will sing the plough-song
That blesses the cleaving share.

I will go with my father a-sowing
To the red field by the sea,
And the rooks and the gulls and the starlings
Will come flocking after me.
I will sing to the striding sowers
With the finch on the greening sloe,
And my father will sing the seed-song
That only the wise men know.

I will go with my father a-reaping
To the brown field by the sea,
And the geese and the crows and the children
Will come flocking after me.
I will sing to the tanfaced reapers
With the wren in the heat of the sun,
And my father will sing the scythe-song
That joys for the harvest done.

THE SHINING SPACES OF THE SOUTH

The shining spaces of the south,
The circle of the year, the sea,
The blowing rose, the maiden's mouth,
The love, the hate, the ecstasy,
The golden wood, the shadowed stream,
The dew, the light, the wind, the rain,
The man's desire, the woman's dream,
The bed embrace, the childing pain,
The sound of music heard afar,
The breathing grass, the broken sod,
The sun, the moon, the twilight star—
Do all proclaim the mind of God.
Then why should I, who am but clay,
Think otherwise, or answer nay ?

LIKE A TUFT OF CEANABHAN

Like a tuft of *ceanabhan*
Blowing in the wind
Is my slender Aine Ban—
White and soft and kind.

Kind her heart is, but her clann's
Cold as clay or stone.
Would that I had herds and lands
To take her for my own !

THE HERB-LEECH

I have gathered *luss*
At the wane of the moon,
And supped its sap
With a yewen spoon.
I have sat a spell
By the carn of Medb,
And smelt the mould
Of the red queen's grave.
I have dreamed a dearth
In the darkened sun,
And felt the hand
Of the Evil One.
I have fathomed war
In the comet's tail,
And heard the crying
Of Gall and Gael.
I have seen the spume
On the dead priest's lips,
And the " holy fire "
On the spars of ships ;
And the shooting stars
On Barthelmy's Night,
Blanching the dark
With ghostly light ;
And the corpse-candle
Of the seer's dream,
Bigger in girth
Than a weaver's beam ;

And the shy hearth-fairies
About the grate,
Blowing the turves
To a whiter heat.
All things on earth
To me are known,
For I have the gift
Of the Murrain Stone!

WHO BUYS LAND

Who buys land buys many stones,
Who buys flesh buys many bones;
Who buys eggs buys many shells,
Who buys love buys nothing else.

Love is a burr upon the floor,
Love is a thief behind the door;
Who loves leman for her breath
May quench his fire and cry for death!

Love is a bridle, love is a load,
Love is a thorn upon the road;
Love is the fly that flits its hour,
Love is the shining venom-flower.

Love is a net, love is a snare,
Love is a bubble blown with air;
Love starts hot, and waning cold,
Is withered in the grave's mould!

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THE POET LOOSED A WINGÈD SONG

The poet loosed a wingèd song
Against the hulk of England's wrong.
Were poisoned words at his command,
'Twould not avail for Ireland.

The soldier lifted up a sword,
And on the hills in battle poured
His life-blood like an ebbing sea—
And still we pine for liberty.

The friar spoke his bitter hope,
And danced upon the gallows rope.
Were he to dance that dance again
A hundred times, 'twould be in vain.

Christ save us ! only thou canst save !
The nation staggers to the grave.
Can genius, valour, faith be given,
And win no recompense of heaven ?

No, Christ ! by Ireland's martyrs, no !
'Twas not for this we suffered so.
Die, die again on Calvary tree,
If needs be, Christ, to set us free !
To set us free !

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SIC TRANSIT

I lit my tallow
An hour ago,
And now it is burning
Dark and low.

The glimmer lengthens
And turns about,
Sinks in the sconce—
Then flickers out!

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